

1SHORT.DOC

A new holistic doctor hit San Angelo in a big way a year or so ago. He's a brilliant man, a medical genius, in my opinion, and I haven't even met him.

Prescribes rare beef for his patients. Has full endorsement of every herder in the shortgrass country, or soon will, as news spreads of his wisdom. Having a doctor prescribe our product is the first good news since beef tallow was considered for gun wadding in the War of Northern Aggression in 1863.

Beef consumption dropped to 63 pounds per person last year. Over half of that amount was ground meat for McDonald's and the pizza outfits.

We had given up hope of ever hearing a favorable word about beef or lamb. The confounded British sent all the grief of the bad publicity of mad cow disease over here duty free, arriving in time last week to break the chances of fat cattle bringing \$70. The skies fell in around the meat markets without there ever being one symptom of the disease turning up in our country.

Old lady Oprah Winfrey contributed more than her share, ending an interview with an author of a bogus treatise on bovine diseases by exclaiming she'd "never touch beef again." Ten to 15 million Americans watch her show. All of the top number must have seen that program as beef sales decreased the next day on every retail market.

Several of my friends go to the new doctor. He yanks them off of their regular training tables of strawberry cheesecakes and whipped cream and pecan pies soaked in maple syrup, and puts them to eating high protein food and low carbohydrates. I pirate every bit of information I can, to cut down on my medical bills.

Since he is the rage around town, all I need to do to cop the holistic doctor's stuff is carry a note pad to parties. Each little group discusses the good doctor's latest advice: "He put Mary Elizabeth to eating four fried eggs and six slices of bacon for breakfast, and she feels wonderful." I initial the pad, "M.E. four eggs and six s.b., feels great." The next group adds: "After Doctor had Charles drop pasta for steak, his allergies ended." I note that C. eats steak and doesn't sneeze. By the end of the evening, I have a full week's inside coverage on holistic medicine without being out more than the pencil lead for the notes.

By direct interviews I learned further that he prescribes vitamins and gives transfusions of hydrogen peroxide to revive immune systems. One dentist I talked to was awful upset about being referred a patient for an extraction, because the holistic guy diagnosed a bad tooth as causing back pains. I think the real problem was worrying whether the hydrogen peroxide transfusions were going to change the flow of blood in gum operations. He seemed to feel better after I explained how many quart bottles of

peroxide I used irrigating the abscesses on big-jawed cattle. In fact, the time the Big Boss had an Acadian guy visiting the ranch from Louisiana knock a blind tooth from the jaw of one of his polo ponies with a chisel, the old boy doused the wound in hydrogen peroxide.

Don't think this master of drills and grinders I was consoling is a dumb head. He is an astute businessman. The minute he read a hockey team was coming to San Angelo, he became a big supporter. Hockey players and hockey fans knock out a lot of teeth, slugging each other and falling on the ice. No sport, even football, requires as much bridge work as hockey.

Alternative medicine income, including the sale of herbs and vitamins connected to the business, increased 70 percent in the past seven years. Instead of going for bypasses, the trend seems to be to "bypass" the traditional system. The explanation I read said chemotherapy and the new drugs were so powerful, folks were changing from fear of the consequences of the new treatments.

"Homeopathy," the article said, "developed in 1789 in a similar period of drastic cures in the age of bloodletting leeches, sharp lances and super-potent laxatives and horrible emetics." (Once it was believed the reason Angelo doctors bought so many farms on Spring Creek was because of the abundance of leeches on the river banks, but the charge was proven to be a untrue. The doctors bought the places to

make the IRS think they were farmers and make the public think they were country gentlemen.)

My investigation isn't complete. I've talked to the fans and the dropouts. Whether I go to the holistic doctor or not, I am going to have to stay in touch to know how to feed guests from San Angelo. Might be useful, however, for the holistic doctor to study lumpy jaw and hydrogen peroxide washes. He may also need to make a goodwill visit on the dental community ...